

AGGRESSIVE, SLICK WYCOMBE DAZZLE DULWICH

Home James Means Goals!

Dulwich Hamlet 2, Wycombe Wanderers 3

“WITH this team we can really go places. The boys played splendid football, well up to Southern League standard,” Wycombe Wanderers’ newly-appointed temporary coach Graham Adams, the former Oxford United player, told me on Saturday after watching Wanderers dazzle Hamlet, writes Argus.

Wycombe were unbelievably good. They played slick, imaginative push-and-run soccer which had the young Dulwich side careering in baffled circles for most of the match. Two lucky goals flattered Hamlet who might well have been hammered to the tune of 5-0 or 6-0.



Peter James
Goal Hungry

All three Wycombe goals were scored by ‘new’ Peter James. Told by Adams to shoot at every opportunity, whether he missed or not, Peter was in terrific form. He scared the daylights out of the Dulwich fans whenever he received the ball near goal. His three goals were all magnificent opportunist efforts.

If James can maintain this form the nostalgia for Paul Bates will quickly disappear.

In point of fact—Bates or no Bates—the Wycombe side which outclassed Dulwich on Saturday, there is no other word, was easily the best Wanderers’ combination to be seen at Champion Hill in recent seasons.

With the arrival of George Blair, the Wycombe forwards seem to have struck up a kind of enchanted understanding. He plays with Len Worley like a blood brother, interchanging positions by instinct and sharing subtle, fluid moves as if they have been playing together all their lives.

James was like a dog with six tails in this company, pouncing on the openings in an inspired mood. Sharing in the general havoc created by the Wycombe attack was Tommy Holmes, another master schemer, and young Steve Hyde, whose soccer wisdom belies his years.

STRONG HALVES

So dominant were Wanderers on Saturday that they developed fully three quarters of all the attacks. Dulwich were so harmless by comparison that they penetrated the Wycombe defence on only three or four occasions in the second half.

The strength and skill of the Wycombe half backs was another factor in this resounding win. Charles Gale, built like a tank, was a real menace to Dulwich and is obviously going to be even better when the going gets really tough. John Fisher virtually played young Lew Manze, Hamlet’s much-boosted centre-forward, out of the game and Dave Thomas, was one of the most constructive and tireless players on the field.

A 1-1 interval score was rank injustice to Wanderers. Peter James had already hit the foot of the Dulwich goalpost before he slammed Wanderers into a 30th minute lead with a shot which the inexperienced Hamlet goalkeeper Beerling could merely grope after. Blair and Beck shared in the move.

SOCCER MYSTERY

The 42nd minute penalty goal by Reg Merrit, which put Hamlet level, was one of soccer’s great mysteries. Referee Mr. H. E. Jones awarded a corner, consulted a linesman and then—fully a minute later—decided that a Wycombe defender had handled in the penalty area.

A superbly confident Wycombe side turned the Dulwich goal into a second half ‘Aunt Sally’. Gale hit a goalpost; Beerling just managed to turn a Thomas drive over the bar; Holmes flashed a header just wide—it was poetic justice when James headed a Blair cross into the net to give Wycombe a 57th minute 2-1 lead.

Although John Beck scored an ‘own goal’ equaliser for Hamlet after 77 minutes, slicing a fierce cross past Ken Brown, Wycombe were in no mood to be robbed.

With the wing-halves feeding the Wycombe forwards with a flood of passes the winner had to come. Once again Blair shared in the goal. He flicked a cunning ball through the centre and James strode past hesitant defenders to slam the ball into the net.

On this form . . . just watch Wycombe climb!